

How to Engage with Frustrated Guests

If someone gets frustrated or angry, **always be gracious. Remember: it's more important to have the heart of Jesus toward them than to be "right".**

- A. Why do people get upset?
 - 1. Family of origin: temperament or family culture
 - 2. Lack of emotional management skills
 - 3. Past success with similar tactics
 - 4. Overwhelmed and panicking
- B. It is important how we handle ourselves
 - 1. Self-control is one of the fruit of the spirit
 - 2. The enemy of high emotions is rational thought: stay cool, calm, and collected. **Pay attention to your body language** - Be sure it is fully calm, sympathetic in nature. (Arms uncrossed, shoulders and toes facing the person, full eye contact, don't get too close, etc.)
 - 3. Speak low and slow and respectfully. **"A gentle answer turns away wrath." Proverbs 15:1.**
 - 4. Say flash prayers
- C. How should we react to the guest?
 - 1. **Try to take them off to the side** if they are visually and verbally upset so it doesn't distract others.
 - 2. Listen, listen, listen! Listen to them. Do not interrupt. Give them space to share their experience, fully without excuses. Sometimes people just need a safe space to vent; you may be that safe person for them today. We never know the baggage people are bringing into their experience at the church.
 - 3. Say "I am sorry." Take personal responsibility, even if it was not your fault. Oftentimes the guest just wants to feel heard and that the mistake is being taken to heart
 - 1. Simple responses.
 - 2. Stay away from saying "no" or "yes". Never make promises or give them what they want if it's not appropriate!
 - 3. You can say, "I'm not sure if we can do that, let me have you talk to one of our leaders."

Leaders, you have a much higher degree of responsibility when dealing with our frustrating yes. Here are some things that can help with navigating these conversations:

- **STAY CALM** in any situation. If you appear stressed, confused, or anxious then our guests will feel anxious.
- **Take steps toward resolution** after giving them time to share their frustrations. Let them know that we are going to do everything we can to make sure they get help with their situation as soon as possible. But that doesn't mean that we are going to automatically give them what they want
- **Take down their information and any details you can provide.** Please also include your name so we can call you with any questions we might have.
- If the guest presents an **escalating danger**, ask them to leave the premises, even offering to walk them out to their car. Give them their food and/or clothing if possible.
- If the crisis is beyond the Lighthouse leader's ability to handle, the person scheduled for Crisis on Call (COC) at your campus should be notified. (All you have to do is call the main Church number, 912-925-9657 and ask for your campus COC).
- If a guest presents an **immediate danger**, apologetically inform them that you are about to call the police. If they continue to escalate, then go ahead and call the police.

Two critical things to remember:

- 1. Jesus has promised you that the Holy Spirit will be with you. When they hand you over, **don't worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say**, because in that hour what you are to say will be given to you.
- 2. In the entire history of the Lighthouse, including all campuses, there has never been a guest who has physically pushed, or attacked a staff member or searching member.

Remember also: It's going to be OK. God is with you!